

Message Text

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ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

EB-07 FMC-02 INR-07 NSAE-00 CG-00 OFA-01 DLOS-04

SSO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 NSCE-00 L-03 JUSE-00 SCA-01

INRE-00 /058 W

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O 261015Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8190

UNCLAS MOSCOW 18419

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: CGEN UR CASC PFOR UR

SUBJECT: TWO SOVIET STEVEDORES SUFFOCATE ON US SHIP IN SOVIET PORT

1. CAPTAIN PETERSON OF US SHIP ULTRAMAR, WHICH IS CURRENTLY UNLOADING CORN IN SOVIET PORT ILYACHASK (NEAR ODESSA), CALLED EMBASSY DECEMBER 26 TO REPORT THAT TWO SOVIET STEVEDORES DIED ON HIS SHIP. THE INCIDENT OCCURRED DECEMBER 25 AT APPROXIMATELY 9:30 A.M. AS SOVIET CREW WAS UNLOADING CARGO. ACCORDING TO PETERSON, SOVIETS, WITHOUT NOTIFICATION TO THE US CAPTAIN OR CREW, ENTERED A HOLD CONTAINING CORN WHICH HAD BEEN SEALED. THE TWO SOVIET STEVEDORES WERE APPARENTLY OVERCOME DUE TO LACK OF OXYGEN IN THE HOLD (TEST RUN AFTER THE INCIDENT FOUND 14 PERCENT OXYGEN COMPOSITION OF AIR IN HOLD).

2. ACCORDING TO PETERSON, THE PORT UNION COMMITTEE HOLDS THE SHIP RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATHS, AND UNLOADING OF GRAIN WAS HALTED FROM THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT UNTIL APPROXIMATELY 10:00 P.M. DECEMBER 25. UNLOADING IS NOW PROCEEDING BUT NOT AT PRE-INCIDENT RATE. PETERSON EXPECTS THAT NORMAL UNLOADING RATE WILL BE RESUMED DECEMBER 26. OPERATIONS IN THE HOLD WHERE THE INCIDENT TOOK PLACE AND IN A SIMILAR HOLD HAVE BEEN HALTED PENDING TESTS OF THE AIR. NO FORMAL CHARGES HAVE BEEN MADE AGAINST CAPTAIN OR UNCLASSIFIED

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CREW, AND NO AMERICANS ARE CURRENTLY BEING DETAINED.

PETERSON BRIEFLY CONSULTED SOVIET MARITIME LIABILITY LAWYER REPRESENTING THE SOVIET INSURANCE AGENCY, INGOSTRAKH, BUT HE INTENDS TO AWAIT LEGAL ADVICE FROM HIS COMPANY BEFORE SIGNING STATEMENTS ON THE INCIDENT.

2. PETERSON TOLD CONSOFFS THAT HE SENT TWO TELEGRAMS TO THE SHIP OWNERS AND THAT HE WILL CONTACT THEM BY TELEPHONE AT OOB DECEMBER 26, NEW YORK TIME. OWNER IS AVON MARINE, 410 LAKEVILLE ROAD, LAKE SUCCESS, NEW YORK 11040 (CABLE ADDRESS AVON MARINE, LAKE SUCCESS), BUT SHIP IS CURRENTLY UNDER CHARTER TO BURMAH OIL TANKERS, LTD., 1185 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS, NEW YORK (CABLE ADDRESS BURMTANK N.Y.). PETERSON SAID SHIP IS INSURED WITH TOVALOP INTERNATIONAL, BUT HE COULD NOT PROVIDE ADDRESS OF FIRM.

4. EMBASSY REQUESTS DEPARTMENT CONTACT SHIP OWNERS TO CONFIRM THAT PETERSON'S NOTIFICATIONS CONCERNING THE INCIDENT HAVE BEEN RECEIVED. EMBASSY WILL REPORT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS. STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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